

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 00616 161138Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15  
CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06  
PRS-01 /064 W  
-----161424Z 109751 /47

R 160643Z APR 77  
FM USINT BAGHDAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4404  
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS  
AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
AMEMBASSY LONDON  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN  
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 616

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, PINT IZ  
SUBJECT: BAATH PARTY THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

1. DESPITE WEEKS OF PROPAGANDA BUILDUP AND A THREE-DAY ORGY OF SELF CONGRATULATION, THE THIRTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE BAATH PARTY WERE A DISMAL FAILURE. BAGHDAD WAS DECKED OUT IN ITS FESTIVE BEST, AN NO PART OF THE CITY ESPACED THE PATRIOTIC SONGS AND ROUSING SPEECHES WHICH BLARED FROM PUBLIC LOUDSPEADERS. THE STREAM OF VISITORS WAS FINALLY TRICLING TO AN END ON APRIL 13, A WEEK AFTER THE FLOOD BEGAN. BUT ALMOST NO ONE OF CONSEQUENCE, ASIDE FROM SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN DELEGATIONS, WAS HERE FOR THE BIG SHOW.

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PAGE 02 BAGHDA 00616 161138Z

2. ORGANIZERS OF THE CELEBRATION HAD CLEARLY HOPED THAT BAGHDAD WOULD PLAY HOST TO PROMINENT LEADERS OF REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AND PROGRESSIVE REGIMES FROM THE THIRD WORLD. EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WERE REPRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF THEIR COMMUNIST PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEES WHO, WHILE GENERALL UNKNOWN TO US, APPEAR TO BE PERSONALITIES ENJOYING SOME RESPECT IN THEIR HOME CAPITALS. LEVEL OF

COMMUNIST REPRESENTATION WAS BOOSTED BY CONCURRENT PRESENCE IN IRAQ OF HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET ECONOMIC DELEGATIONS. NON-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, ON OTHER HAND, WERE GENERALLY REPRESENTED BY A RAG TAG OF EXTREMISTS AND FRINGE GROUPS MIXED WITH A FEW GOVERNMENT MINISTERS FROM NEEDY COUNTRIES IN AFRICA AND FROM THE PDY. THE ABSENCE OF A DELEGATION FROM THE ALGERIAN LIBERATION FRONT MUST HAVE BEEN ACUTELY FELT, AND LIBYA LIMITED ITS PARTICIPATION TO TWO MEMBERS OF THE SECRETARIAT OF THE RECENTLY FORMED POPULAR MOVEMENT. THE ONLY PALESTINIAN VISITORS WERE SECOND RANKING REJECTIONIST-FRONT STALWARTS, MOST OF WHOM DEPEND ON IRAQI LARGESSE. WESTER COUNTRIES WERE TO A LARGE EXTENT REPRESENTED BY THEIR COMMUNIST PARTIES, A FACT WHICH SHOULD CAUSE SOME DISCOMFORT TO A REGIME THAT IS SEEKING EXPANDED RELATIONS ON A STATE TO STATE BASIS.

3. AS THE NATURE OF THE FOREIGN RESPONSE BECAME CLEAR, THE IRAQI LEADERSHIP RETREATED FROM THE SPOTLIGHT LEAVING THE BAATH PARTY NATIONAL COMMAND AT CENTER STAGE. PRESIDENT BAKR LIMITED HIS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION TO THE RITUAL CALL ON NATIONAL COMMAND SYG MICHEL AFLAQ AND TO A FORMAL AUDIENCE FOR THE RANKING FOREIGN GUEST, THE VICE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA. BAKR'S DEPUTY, SADDAM HUSSEING, WAS EQUALLY DIFFIDENT AND FOUND TIME FOR A SERIOUS INTERVIEW WITH AN AMERICAN NEWSMAN ON THE ANNIVERSARY DATE. THE TASK OF GREETING AND ENTERTAINING FOREIGN DIGNITARIES FELL TO AFLAQ AND HIS NON-IRAQI COLLEAGUES  
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PAGE 03 BAGHDA 00616 161138Z

ON THE NATIONAL COMMAND.

4. FOR CONNOISSEURS OF BAATHI HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY, THE HIGH POINT OF THE FESTIVITIES WAS THE LENGTHY ADDRESS OF SYG AND PARTY FOUNDER MICHEL AFLAQ. HE TRACED THE DEVELOPMENTS, LAYING STRESS ON THE FAULTS OF REGIONALISM WHICH DIVERTED THE MASSES FROM THEIR PAN-ARAB GOALS. WHILE PAYING TRIBUTE TO IRAQ AS THE ONE SUCCESSFUL MERGER OF NATIONALIST IDEOLOGY AND PRACTICAL GOVERNMENT, HE EXPRESSED BITTERNESS MIXED WITH NOSTALGIA FOR THE FORFEITURE BY HIS NATIVE SYRIA OF ITS LEADING ROLE ON THE PATH TOWARD ARAB UNITY. HE SCORED BOTH SYRIA AND EGYPT FOR EMBRACING IMPERIALISM AS A PRELUDE TO THEIR SURRENDER TO THE ZIONIST ENTITY. HE ALSO CITED THE PALESTINIAN MOVEMENT FOR THE SIN OF REGIONALISM IN FAVORING A PALESTINIAN STATE OVER COMMITMENT TO CONTINUED RESISTANCE. BUT AFLAQ DOES NOT DESPAIR OF ARAB NATIONALISM AND ITS ULTIMATE TRIUMPH, DESCRIBING THE ARAB NATION AS A "TIDE WHICH DAMMED AT ONE PLACE,

BURSTS OUT AT ANOTHER." HE CITED WITH APPROVAL THE  
RECENT RIOTS IN EGYPT AS AN EXAMPLE OF A POPULAR  
UPRISING AGAINST A COUNTER REVOLUTIONARY REGIME.

5. COMMENT: THIS MAY HAVE BEEN THE LAST HURRAH FOR  
AN AGING AND INCREASINGLY FEEBLE AFLAQ. WE HAVE  
ALSO SEEN SOME SIGNS OF TENSION BETWEEN IRAQ'S  
REGIONAL COMMAND AND THE NATIONAL COMMAND WHOSE ACTIONS HAVE  
CAUSED SO MANY DIFFICULTIES FOR IRAQ'S STATE-TO-STATE  
RELATIONS WHILE PROVIDING SO LITTLE RETURN IN THE  
FORM OF INTERNATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY SOLIDARITY. FOR  
THE TIME BEING, HOWEVER, THE NATIONAL COMMAND AND PARTY  
FOUNDER AFLAQ ARE USEFUL TOOLS IN IRAQ'S RIVALRY WITH  
SYRIA, AN INSTANCE WHERE BAATH PARTY POLITICS COINCIDES  
WITH THE MUTUAL HOSTILITY OF TWO NEIGHBORS WHO HAVE BEEN  
AT ODDS THROUGHOUT MOST OF RECORDED HISTORY.

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PAGE 04 BAGHDA 00616 161138Z

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## Message Attributes

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